



Judiciary Committee – March 15, 20127

Testimony in Support of HB 7260, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE AND REGULATION OF DRONES.

Good morning, Chairman Tong, Chairman Doyle, Chairman Kissel and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Brian Anderson and I am speaking on behalf of Council 4 AFSCME, a union of 35,000 public and private employees.

Council 4 supports HB 7260, particularly section 8. This section makes it a Class B felony for anyone to fly a drone over a correctional institution and drop a weapon or dangerous instrument. There have been numerous instances in the United States, Canada, Europe and other places where criminals have used drones to drop illicit items including weapons to inmates in prison. I include a Newsweek article with our testimony about a man who claims to have created a “goldmine” in drone dropping cell phones, drugs and other contraband to inmates in Maryland. He said this after being arrested while doing so by Maryland police.

If you google “drone” and “prison” you will see scores of articles about such incidents. The Federal Bureau of Prisons has put out an RFP (request for proposal) for anti-drone technology to stop such drops. This shows the difficulty of stopping such a flight.

Attached is an article about the drop of a gun into one of Canada’s most high security prisons. Such a drop could occur at a Connecticut correctional facility. Correctional facilities can be quite volatile places. Our members don’t need this kind of activity to unsettle an already difficult place to maintain.

Passing such a criminal sanction for dropping weapons gives law enforcement one more tool in fighting such crime. It will also wake up people that flying drones over prisons to drop contraband is not only a very bad idea, but a serious crime.

Thank you for your attention. I'd be happy to answer questions.

Someone Used a Drone to Deliver a Handgun Into a Notorious Canadian Prison

By Justin Ling, *Vice News*

December 14, 2015 | 2:35 pm

Authorities in a Quebec prison found out on Sunday that one of their prisoners was likely armed with a handgun, thanks to a delivery from a drone on Saturday.

According to a report in Quebec newspaper La Presse, somebody used a drone to make an illegal delivery to the Rivière-des-Prairies prison, which sits on the Eastern edge of Montreal island, over the weekend. Sources who spoke anonymously to La Presse said the drone dropped a handgun in sector S-2 — which houses the prison's convicted mafiosos and biker gang members — and the prison didn't find out about the delivery until a day later.

Guards from nearby jails were called in to help search for the gun on Sunday and all staff were required to wear bulletproof vests during the search. All inmates in the sector were confined to their cells.

The list of inmates at Rivière-des-Prairies is one of the more notorious in the country. Several of the alleged mafia and gang leaders arrested last month as part of a massive police bust are housed at the penitentiary.

Also incarcerated at the jail is Luka Magnotta, the Ontario native who was captured in Europe after he posted a video online of himself dismembering a body. Parts of that body were mailed to two Canadian political parties, and two elementary schools.

The prison is the most violent in the province, partly thanks to the criminals housed there, but also thanks to an overcrowding problem.

Despite that, a National Post report cites the prison's architects, saying that the jail is "a warm and friendly environment which simultaneously incorporates principles of security, efficiency and respect for inmates."

A request for comment sent to the union which represents the guards at the jail went unanswered.

This isn't the first security breach at a Quebec jail in recent years. In 2014, a helicopter landed on a recreation yard at a prison near Quebec City. Three prisoners escaped on the helicopter and eluded cops for two weeks, before finally being apprehended in an upscale condo in Montreal's Old Port.

After that jailbreak, the Quebec government moved to institute no-fly zones over several of the province's prisons.

Drones have been used to deliver contraband before. One incident near a federal jail in Kingston resulted in a cell phone and some tobacco landing on the prison yard there.

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